



Satellite image with enhanced low cloud-top temperatures (degrees C) for 7:15 a.m. EDT (NOAA)

Agricultural Weather Highlights - Monday - December 30, 2002

- ***In the West***, rain and snow showers continue across ***northern California and the Northwest***, further improving soil moisture reserves for pastures and winter grains, and boosting high-elevation snow packs. However, the much of the remainder of the ***West*** continues to experience a variety of detrimental effects due to long-term precipitation deficits, including drought-lowered reservoirs and stressed rangelands.
- ***On the Plains***, mild, dry weather is melting much of the remaining snow cover across ***southern portions of the region***, but leaving most of the winter wheat crop exposed to potential cold outbreaks and wind storms in drought-affected areas from ***eastern Colorado and northwestern Kansas northward into Montana***.
- ***In the Corn Belt***, melting snow and developing rain showers are creating muddy conditions in fields and feedlots from the ***Ohio Valley into the lower Great Lakes region***. In contrast, mild, mostly dry weather continues to favor off-season fieldwork across the ***upper Midwest***.
- ***In the South***, warm, dry weather favors a limited return to fieldwork in the ***southern Atlantic region***, but showers and thunderstorms are returning to already saturated fields from ***western Gulf Coast region to the Delta***.

Outlook: A developing storm over the ***south-central U.S.*** will bring widespread, heavy rain and locally severe thunderstorms to the ***lower Mississippi Valley***. Showers and thunderstorms will spread across the ***Southeast*** on New Year's Eve, reaching the ***Mid-Atlantic and Northeastern States*** by New Year's Day. Farther west, frequent rain and snow showers are likely for the entire week in ***northern California*** and the ***Pacific Northwest***, while mild, dry weather will prevail in the ***Southwest***. The NWS 6-10 day outlook for January 4-8, 2003, calls for above-normal precipitation in the ***eastern Gulf Coast region*** and in the ***East from the Appalachians to the Atlantic Coast***. Meanwhile, below-normal precipitation is forecast for most of the ***western half of the U.S.*** Above-normal temperatures are expected across most of the nation, although cooler-than-normal conditions will prevail in the ***Southeast***.

Contact: Brad Rippey, Agricultural Meteorologist, USDA/OCE/WAOB, Washington, D.C. (202-720-2397)